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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST PART (PUBLIC)*
OF THE 129th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 28 January 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. BADRAN

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CRC/C/SR.129/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE GENERAL DISCUSSION ON "PROTECTION OF THE CHILD AGAINST ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION" (agenda item 8) (continued)

1. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the subcommittee appointed to follow up on the recommendations made at the fourth session (CRC/C/20, Annex VI) had contacted United Nations specialized agencies, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and financial institutions to ensure that their specialized knowledge was put to good use in the fight to prevent the economic exploitation of children. UNESCO had been requested to consider setting up a programme in which particular emphasis would be placed on providing children with an education rather than using them as a source of labour.

2. Mrs. Santos Pais had prepared a statement on protecting children against economic exploitation which, it was hoped, could be included in the report of the fifth session. Due to the constraints of time, he suggested that Mrs. Belembaogo and Mrs. Santos Pais should be entrusted with the task of approving the final text for inclusion in the report.

3. It was so decided.

4. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the subcommittee had also proposed that a dossier should be compiled, containing all key documents from the Committee, other human rights treaty-monitoring bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and United Nations specialized agencies. The ILO had been approached, in order to enlist its support in the preparation and distribution of the dossier.

5. Mr. GRIMSMANN (International Labour Organisation) said that the printing and distribution services of the ILO had been consulted on the matter, but their initial reaction had not been positive; further approaches would be made.

FUTURE MEETINGS (agenda item 11) (continued)

6. The CHAIRPERSON noted that the Committee had decided to devote one day of its sixth session to a general discussion on the "Role of the family in the promotion of the rights of the child".

7. Miss MASON said that the working paper prepared by the Working Group on the General Discussion on Family Environment had tried to streamline the issues to be considered, following consultations with NGOs and other competent bodies. The four basic principles of the Convention: the "best interests" of the child; non-discrimination; the inherent right to life, survival and development; and the child's right to express his or her views, would form the basis for the general discussion. The evolution and importance of the family,

and civil rights and freedoms within the family would also be included as sub-topics. Within those areas, the discussions would focus on different family structures including, inter alia, the nuclear family, single-parent families and adoptive families, from the point of view of how they affected children's rights and in the context of articles 5, 18 and 19 of the Convention. Civil rights and freedoms would be considered, starting from the assumption that children's civil rights began within the family. Other important aspects to be addressed included how to ensure a balance between parental authority and the realization of the rights of the child, and the problem of abuse, looking beyond merely physical but also to psychological and verbal abuse.

8. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the working paper and hence the general discussion should pay particular attention to the sensitive question of the fine balance between outside support, including from authorities, for the family and respect for its integrity, and ensuring that children in the framework of the family were protected against all forms of abuse. In that regard, articles 5, 18 and 19 of the Convention would form an essential starting point for the discussions. An informal meeting had been held with an organization called Epoque International which was conducting research on issues contained in article 19 of the Convention, and which should, therefore, be invited to take part in the general discussion. As additional emphasis was needed on the subject of parental guidance and responsibilities the Working Group should draft the text accordingly.

9. Miss MASON endorsed Mr. Hammarberg's suggestions.

10. The CHAIRPERSON said that it would be useful if the discussions on finding a balanced approach could be supplemented by hard facts and research.

11. Mrs. EUFEMIO added that such information should also include cross-cultural research.

12. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should be invited to contribute to the discussion, as it was in a privileged position to observe the role of the family in the case of refugees.

13. Mrs. BELEMBAOGO said that the working paper should make it clear who was to be invited to the general discussion, and suggested that invitations should be extended to United Nations specialized agencies, NGOs, research and academic institutions, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Secretariat of the International Year of the Family.

14. It was so decided.

15. Mr. HAMMARBERG suggested that the general discussion on the "Role of the family in the promotion of the rights of the child" should be held on 10 October 1994.

16. It was so decided.

17. The CHAIRPERSON suggested that the general discussion should be introduced by Mrs. Belembaogo, speaking on the evolution and importance of the family, and Miss Mason on civil rights and freedoms within the family.

18. It was so decided.

The public meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.